

Message Text

SECRET

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DRAFTED BY NEA: AATHERTON (FOR THE SECRETARY)

APPROVED BY S/S-O:LRMACFARLANE

NSC - GEN. SCOWCROFT (PHONE)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO FLASH

INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 181222 TOSEC 190013

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, US, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION

REF: STATE 180857 TOSEC 190002

1. THIS MESSAGE REPLACES THAT CONTAINED IN REFTEL.
2. PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATELY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT SADAT:

QUOTE: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

AS YOU KNOW FROM EARLIER EXCHANGES WE HAVE HAD WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO EVACUATE AMERICAN CITIZENS FROM BEIRUT. I APPRECIATE THE HELP WHICH WE HAVE HAD FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT IN THIS REGARD. I AM WRITING TO YOU PERSONALLY IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE THAT EXISTS BETWEEN US, BECAUSE THE SITUATION HAS DEVELOPED IN A WAY THAT CAUSES ME DEEP CONCERN.

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AT NOON ON JULY 21 OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT INFORMED THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE THAT WE WISHED TO PROCEED TO RESCHEDULE THE ROAD CONVOY WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED AND ASKED FOR CONFIRMATION THAT THE CONVOY COULD TRAVEL TO DAMASCUS ON JULY 24. LATER THAT DAY THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE REPLIED THAT SATURDAY WAS NOT A GOOD DAY BECAUSE OF THE

GENERALLY UNSTABLE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE. IN DISCUSSING THE PARTICULARS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE CITED SUCH MATTERS AS PRESIDENT ASSAD'S RECENT SPEECH WHICH HE CALLED UNHELPFUL, THE FAILURE OF THE TRUCE AT TEL ZATAAR AND THE UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING THE PLO DELEGATION WHICH HAS DEPARTED FOR DAMASCUS FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SYRIANS.

I AM SURE YOU WILL SEE THAT THIS REPLY FROM THE PLO MAKES CLEAR THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS ARE BEING HELD HOSTAGE TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON. I AM ALSO CERTAIN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT BEING PUT IN THIS POSITION. WE ARE PREPARED TO FOLLOW WHATEVER MEANS ARE MOST PRACTICAL TO GET OUR CITIZENS OUT OF LEBANON, WHETHER BY LAND OR BY SEA, AS WAS DONE PREVIOUSLY. IF YOU WILL GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO LEADERSHIP AND IMPRESS UPON THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF FACILITATING THE EVACUATION OF OUR CITIZENS FROM BEIRUT, I AM CERTAIN THIS WILL CARRY GREAT WEIGHT WITH THEM. I DO NOT NEED TO TELL YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS TO AVOID A CALAMITY FOR ALL THAT WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE IN OUR PURSUIT OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

WARM PERSONAL REGARDS, GERALD FORD.

3. FYI. WE WANT THIS MESSAGE TO GET TO THE PLO FROM THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE ARE NOT INSTRUCTING SEELYE TO CONVEY IT TO THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT. END FYI. ROBINSON

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